

REMARKS

Prior to this Amendment, claims 1-22 were pending. By this amendment claims 1-8 and 22 are canceled. Claims 20-21 were canceled by examiner's amendment, as authorized by applicants' attorneys. Claims 9-19 are now pending and under consideration.

Claims 9 and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Yoshida, U.S. Patent No. 6,388,759, in view of Kukuda, Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-023564. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 9 recites "a controller that determines an automatic-clear time for the input apparatus on which the input operation was performed, wherein a different automatic-clear time is determined for each of the plurality of input apparatuses." The Examiner asserts that this feature is taught by Kukuda. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Kukuda teaches that a user can set a clearing time according to a selected function. In other words, the user can set various clearing times for various functions or operating modes of the apparatus. In contrast, according to claim 9, the automatic-clear time is determined based on which input apparatus is used and a different automatic-clear time is determined for each of the input apparatuses. Kukuda only ties the clearing time to selected functions which are not related to a specific input apparatus. Thus, Kukuda fails to teach that which the Examiner asserts.

Claim 13 recites "a table storing data of automatic-clear times respectively corresponding to the plurality of input apparatuses." Kukuda also fails to teach or suggest this feature. The table disclosed in Kukuda relates clear times to operating modes, not input apparatuses. Thus, Kukuda fails to teach or suggest the features of claim 13.

Claim 14 is allowable at least due to its dependency.

Claims 9-12 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Yoshida in view of Hirota, U.S. Patent No. 5,546,166.

Claims 17-19 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Yoshida in view Hirota and further in view of "well known art". These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner relies on Hirota as teaching the feature of "a controller that determines an automatic-clear time for the input apparatus on which the input operation was performed, wherein a different automatic-clear time is determined for each of the plurality of input apparatuses."

Applicants respectfully disagree.

Hirota teaches setting two different auto clear times, one for each of the two guidance displays which can be displayed (col. 5, lines 10-19). Thus, the auto-clear times are not determined differently depending on an input apparatus on which an input operation was performed. Hirota does disclose that a guidance mode can be selected which will extend the auto-clear time, but this does not mean that a different automatic clear time has been determined for a plurality of input apparatuses. Thus, Hirota fails to teach or suggest that for which it is being relied.

The remaining claims are allowable at least due to their respective dependencies. Applicants request that these rejections be withdrawn.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 325772033200.

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Respectfully submitted,

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